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MOSQUITO,

NICARAGUA, AND COSTA-RICA.

MOSQUITO STANDARD.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
EFFINGHAM WILSON, 11, ROYAL EXCHANGE;
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TO

MAJOR-GENERAL MACDONALD, C.B.,

LATE

HER MAJESTY'S SUPERINTENDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AT HONDURAS.

My Dear General,

In proportion as the independence and security of the Mosquito Territory may be an object of interest and value to England, so must the services you, for so many years, rendered to that cause, be highly estimated by all to whom they are known. It was, therefore, with no ordinary pleasure that I received permission to inscribe to you the re-publication of the following pages, as enabling me to pay this public tribute to the generous feeling, patriotic spirit, and enlightened policy which dictated your proceedings when in command at Honduras, towards the Mosquito Indians, their native Sovereign-Chieftain, and his Family.

It should be known, that the late King of Mosquito, brought up and educated at Jamaica by the Duke of Manchester, when Governor there, instead of being a mere savage—as ignorance and malevolence have combined in representing him—was found by you, not merely a civilized being, but a man whose "bearing, manners, and demeanour, were altogether those of a gentleman." Furthermore, it is well it should be known that, a Christian himself, he sought, through a letter addressed to you on the 12th of February 1840, in the following, his own noble language, Her Majesty's aid—"that salutary laws may be established in my kingdom like those which Her Majesty's subjects have the happiness to enjoy, and to introduce among us the blessings of the Christian religion, which alone can ensure us lasting peace."

This wish was responded to by the British Government, to the high credit of this nation. It was so, too, at a moment, when any advantage, which might be derived from strengthening the ties which existed between the Crown of Great Britain and the Mosquito Territory, seemed as remote, as when in times of old, and yet more recently, by the side of our Great Nelson, Mosquito men fought and bled in British ranks, with that undeviating fidelity and devotion which has for upwards of two centuries characterised their attachment to the paramount Sovereignty of Great Britain.

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It is no less satisfactory to know, that the present King, who has likewise received an English education, evinces every anxiety to promote the views so well expressed by his late father; and although he has lost that support, he would have had from his brother, Prince Clarence, a youth of capacity and promise, whose death last year in England, while being brought up under your judicious care, is a calamity for his country, yet will he not falter in his aim, under the shelter of British protection.

The future destiny of the Mosquito Indians, for weal or woe, is in our hands, and there are circumstances of recent growth which amply show, that we have now involved in the observance of our obligations towards them, some of the largest interests of this land, and its wide-spread possessions—interests upon which depend the continuance of our national prosperity, greatness, and glory.

These circumstances are fully developed in the following pages, revealing a new ambition, which, but for Mosquito, would have grown to maturity, jeopardising the security of the British Empire and the peace of the world, no less than the public weal of our Trans-Atlantic brethren themselves.

The facts of the case are clear, official language, official acts, as well at Washington as on the shores of the Pacific, all tending to the same ends,—exclusive privileges, commercial monopoly, and political aggrandisement,—the closing of every *independent* avenue to British and European traffic between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In the face of this, the American Ambassador has ventured at a public dinner the other day, with dry sententiousness, to lay it down that the United States sought no exclusive advantages for their citizens!

This announcement must be hailed with satisfaction, if it be the forerunner of a new line of policy and conduct, but if there should be no change in the course which has been pursued, then such professions may be taken at their true value, as mere cloaks and blinds with which it is essayed to pacify and mislead the British people. The present re-publication of the facts connected with the proceedings of which the Isthmus of Central America has been the object, will at least tend to assist in the appreciating this and similar professions hereafter.

I beg now to subscribe myself,

With the greatest esteem and regard,

Yours most faithfully,

THE AUTHOR.

London, 12th Dec. 1849.

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MOSQUITO,

NICARAGUA, AND COSTA-RICA.

(From the Colonial Magazine for November and December, 1849.

PART I.

STATE OF AFFAIRS.

POSITION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THERE are colonial interests of so momentous a character connected with the project of a Ship Canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, that it calls for our earnest consideration. Its accomplishment amounts, in fact, to a change in that physical conformation of the globe, by which the interchange and intercourse of some of the most distant regions have been regulated. Without the disastrous effects of some great convulsion of nature, breaking through that barrier which interposes between the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, by means of the Isthmus which stretches from North to South America, all the advantages of which a communication between those seas is capable seem likely to be secured by the industry, skill, and enterprise of this age.

Our present object, then, in this article, is briefly to note what is the nature of the questions which have been up to this moment forced upon public attention in connection with this subject.

Before Spain quitted her last hold over the magnificent dominions which the genius, energy, and courage of her earlier sons acquired; the Kingdom of Guatemala, under the intendency of a Captain-General, formed the most central portion of the Isthmus of America, bounded on the north by the Audiencia of Mexico, and on the south by that of the Audiencia of Santa Fé. For the purposes of civil government, the kingdom was divided into five chief districts, consisting of Guatemala, St. Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa-Rica. The whole of these bordered more or less on the Pacific, but Honduras and Guatemala alone possessed any territory, or jurisdiction, on the Atlantic side. That coast, from Cape Honduras on the north to King's Buppan on the south, known as the Mosquito shore, was occupied by a bold and independent race of Indians, whom the Spaniards were never

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able to subdue. Thus Spain was left with nothing but an empty claim, under her Papal grant, of a right, as far as the Pope could give it, to that coast, and to the extirpation of its inhabitants, should they refuse to embrace the Roman faith, and acknowledge her Imperial sway.

The Mosquito Indians found ready allies in the Buccaneers, and having become acquainted with the rivalry which existed between England and Spain, placed themselves from time to time under the protection and alliance of this country, and in the different wars which were subsequently waged with Spain, acted as auxiliaries to the British forces employed on the neighbouring seas and coasts.

In 1786, to the eternal disgrace of our then government, England was led to withdraw her support from the King of Mosquito and his dependent tribes, and to leave the field open to Spain. The cabinet of Madrid, thus left to itself, soon after attempted, by a few expeditions, to conquer the resistance of the Mosquito Indians, but although they obtained temporary successes by bringing superior forces to given spots, they were unable to maintain their positions. The last of their hostile movements took place in 1796, when the Spaniards having been signally defeated at Black River by a Mosquito force commanded by General Lowry Robinson, a native, and subject of the King of Mosquito, (the grandfather of the present king), they desisted from the employment of such means for effecting the subjection of this indomitable race. It was then determined to make the attempt by peaceable efforts through the establishment of trading settlements, to consist at first of well-affected natives of some of the neighbouring islands. For this purpose, in 1803, the king of Spain signed a decree, known as that of San Lorenzo, by which he placed the whole coast under the special supervision and military control of the governor of the island of St. Andrew, in the Caribean sea, subject, however, to the Captains-General of Santa Fé, to whom the care of establishing and defending such proposed settlements was confided.

Nothing, however, was ever done or attempted under this decree. The wars which prevailed in Europe, and the subsequent convulsions in Spain, occasioned the adjournment of designs which were never to be executed. The Mosquito Indians were not again molested in their independence by Spain and renewed their connexion with England.

It is here requisite to direct attention to the chief points of the Mosquito coast and territory which stretched from Cape Honduras to King's Buppan. From the northernmost point, they may be enumerated as consisting of Black River, Blewfields, Cape Gracias a Dios, Port St. John, Matina, and Boca del Toro,

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in none of which had a single Spanish settlement ever existed, while on account of two of these places, Port St. John, (through which, by the river of that name, the waters of the magnificent lake of Granada or Nicaragua find their way into the Atlantic) and Matina, Spain paid tribute to the King of Mosquito, for permission to use them for traffic with the provinces of Nicaragua andC osta Rica. The Spaniards had found it impossible to use, with any security, those ports without the consent of the Mosquito Indians, and hence did this powerful Monarchy, even in her palmiest days, become tributary to a native King of the remnant of those Indian tribes, the nature of whose couutry, and the boldness of whose spirit, had precluded her mastery over them.

Thus Spain, which had erected a fort called San Carlos, on the northern bank of the river St. John, at its junction with the great lake, and another lower down at Castillo Viejo on the left bank of the river, to protect the interior, wns compelled to satisfy herself with a detachment of a corporal and four men at Port St. John, who remained there under the safeguard of Mosquito good faith.

From all this it is apparent that during the temporary suspension in 1786, of those ties of close alliance which bound England and Mosquito together, the latter was able to maintain her position, and independent existence. Such, then, was the state of things, when in 1821 the dominion of Spain was shaken in the Isthmus of the Americas. Before the end of 1823 the revolutions there were complete; a Mexican Empire, including the former kingdom of Guatemala had been established, and as rapidly disappeared. This eventful year, in these annals, closed upon a federative State of Central America, comprised within the territorial limits which had constituted the Kingdom of Guatemala, with the sole exception of the district of Chiapas to the North, which remained annexed to Mexico. It does not appear, whether, at the time when the political convulsions took place by which this consummation was preceded, a Spanish corporal and four men were still in permissive quarters at Port St. John, or whether there was any occupation of Castillo Viejo, but it is certain that long before their termination, every vestige of a Spanish force had disappeared from these outposts, as likewise from Fort San Carlos. Thus ceased all connexion between Spain and the Mosquito territory.

Having once cast off the authority of Spain, the people of the different districts and provinces over which the Captain General of Guatemala had exercised jurisdiction, claimed the right as inherent to each of them, of constituting themselves into separate State Governments. and of free self election as to the State to which they should adhere. Thus were constituted the separate

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States of Guatemala, St. Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, under a federative organisation, and the common name of Central America. The demarcations of each State being much the same as those of the provinces whose names they adopted, were during Spanish rule, with the exception already noticed of Chiapas, and that of the district of Guanacaste, which last elected in favour of adherence to the State of Costa Rica.

The federation of Central America may be said to have practically existed until 1838, but after this period the civil wars which raged among the separate States composing it, prevented any common deliberation, and it is now finally extinct by general consent, the attempt to restore the federal bond, which was made in 1846, having utterly failed. During its existence, the Fort of San Carlos, at the entrance of the lake, was occupied, by direction of the federative President, by a small force from Nicaragua for revenue purposes. Meanwhile, the Port of St. John, where the Spaniards had made no settlement, became occupied by a fluctuating population of Mosquito men and British settlers. This excited the jealousy of the Nicaraguans; and thus, in 1836, fifteen years after the struggle for independence arose, and thirteen subsequent to the constitution of the Central American Federation, a force from Nicaragua came suddenly down and took possession of the place, and claimed the whole territory of Mosquito.

The King of Mosquito, before taking any step to vindicate his rights, communicated with Colonel Macdonald, then Governor and Superintendent of British Honduras, for his advice and assistance, in accordance with the protectorate tie which had long previously been renewed with his two predecessors and himself. Fortunately, in Colonel Macdonald, an artillery officer who had served with distinction under the Duke of Wellington throughout the last war, he found a man of as much intelligence as known resolution. He at once determined to visit the spot in person, and make a tour of inspection along the coast of Mosquito. He accordingly proceeded, in a man-of-war steamer, to Port St. John, and informed the Nicaraguan commandant, a Colonel Quijano, that he had no business there, nor could he be allowed to collect revenues, or exercise jurisdiction at the Port St. John, which was a part of the territory of the King of Mosquito. Quijano declared his government did not recognise any Mosquito territory or King, and declined to depart. The whole matter was then at once summarily concluded, by Colonel Macdonald removing him by force, and landing him on another part of the coast, while his followers dispersed.

A complaint was made on the subject to the British Government, on the part of Nicaragua, which shortly after re-occupied

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the place, and was left in possession, pending the receival of an answer. In reply, they were informed, through Mr. Chatfield, Consul-General to the Central American States, that the King claimed the Port of St. John, as part of his territory, and they were requested to state on what grounds they founded a right to its possession.

In 1843, Colonel Macdonald returned to England, and Mr. Walker, who had been his secretary, was appointed by Lord Aberdeen Consul-General in Mosquito. Meanwhile, no answer could be extracted from Nicaragua on the subject of her pretended claim. It became, at length, necessary to take some step; and the King of Mosquito gave notice, in 1847, that unless the port were restored to him by the 1st of January, 1848, forcible means would be taken to obtain re-possession of it.

The result is known. The King having been quietly reinstated, the Nicaraguans, on the departure of the force which accomplished this, sent troops to pull down the Mosquito flag, and to capture the Mosquito authorities. Upon this, a joint British and Mosquito force, under Captain Lock, R.N., proceeded there, the Nicaraguans retreated up the river, but were dislodged, and the expedition proceeded into the Lake of Nicaragua, having captured Fort San Carlos on the way. There would have been no great difficulty in the three or four hundred British troops and marines, and the force of Mosquito militia, penetrating to the capital of Nicaragua. However, they were not driven to that necessity. The President and Congress of Nicaragua signed a treaty, by which, reserving the right to prove the justice of their claim, they undertook not to molest Mosquito in her occupation of the point in question.

Indeed, the course pursued by Lord Palmerston in directing these proceedings was most opportune, and he has thereby rendered a great and essential service to the best interests of England. A Government in this country is more strengthened in public estimation by such timely acts of necessary firmness and prompt decision, than they can be weakened by the most rabid and concentrated attacks directed by the leaders of organised assemblies, animated by a zeal for passive endurance of wrong, in feeble dread of the possible results of a vigorous and unflinching maintenance of undoubted and important rights. No true statesmen can be regardless of the future dangers and difficulties which are certain to spring from every concession wrung from a weak policy.

Thus, then, the matter stands. The King of Mosquito maintains his ancient rights; and has, besides, the fact in his favour, that whatever these were, he first, on the retirement of Spain and the re-assurance of his independence, against which that power

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plotted, occupied the Port of St. John, now known as Grey Town.* Further, that at the time when the Nicaraguans sent to take the place, and on their expulsion, there was not a single habitation belonging to or held by Nicaraguan citizens, while the small settlement which existed consisted of English settlers and Mosquito Indians. In fact, we should never have heard a word on the subject, had not the United States recently acquired California and the Panama route, through which they anticipate establishing their political and commercial pre-eminence in the Pacific. The question, as put by themselves in even *their official reports*, is plainly this—We must have no independent route between the Atlantic and Pacific—we must secure to ourselves the command of every route, and establish a practical control over, and monopoly of, the trade and communications with the Pacific, and alone have the right to transport troops and munitions of war across the Central American Isthmus. Thus this question becomes of the utmost importance, not to England alone, but to all European nations, which the United States declare they expect to render tributaries to them in their intercourse with the magnificent regions bordering the Pacific. To England it is a more vital question, India may be reached by steam within a very few days as quickly by this the western route as by the Isthmus of Suez—Australia and New Zealand even sooner. There would be small security for these possessions if England yielded in this matter to the pretensions set up by Nicaragua, and said to be backed by the United States.

England ambitions no monopoly, or pre-eminence; but the United States have taught her to estimate the great value of her ancient connection with Mosquito, and this, which she has upheld when no interest pressed her, she must and will now maintain at all costs, as an essential safeguard of future security.

* So named anew, after Sir Charles Grey, Governor of Jamaica, by direction of the King in Council, December 8th, 1847.

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PART II.

AMBITION AND MONOPOLISING SPIRIT OF THE UNITED STATES

AS BEARING ON GREAT BRITAIN AND EUROPE AT LARGE.

The question of a Railroad or a *Canal* communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, has been officially propounded to the United States, as one, for her, of the loftiest ambition :—we announce it to the Trade, Commerce, Shipping, and Colonies of Great Britain, as the most vitally important which could now be presented to their consideration. We do so without hesitation or reserve, for that it is so, can be conclusively proved from the records of Congress,—followed up by the acts of the Executive, and confirmed by the proceedings of the acknowledged diplomatic Agents of the United States.

The success which attended the unscrupulous and unjust war, in which President Polk, managed to involve the United States with Mexico, and their acquisition of California at the peace, rendered the long mooted projects of some communication between the Atlantic and Pacific, a subject of inquiry and important consideration for Congress. Accordingly a committee from that body, were employed early last session in carefully examining the whole subject. In the end they concluded their labours by reporting in favour of a Railroad, and against a Ship Canal.

The committee, by this report,—recommend to Congress that an annual grant of 250,000 dollars should be accorded in favour of a Railroad across Panama—look forward with anxiety to the construction of another Railroad across the North American continent, from the Mississippi river to San Francisco, and emphatically declare against the necessity for an intermediate line of communication. A great northern line through the States to San Francisco—a southern line across the Isthmus of Panama—and no Ship Canal, is their fiat upon the subject. The ground of this preference for a Railroad is plainly avowed. They anticipate the certainty, of the not distant establishment, of the supremacy and power of the United States in the Pacific, should no channel of communication for Shipping exist. In the language of the Report itself, "The construction of this (the Panama Railroad) will throw into our warehouses and shipping the entire commerce of the Pacific ocean. Our ports are on the very way side from Europe to the Isthmus of Panama, and our lines of steamers and packet ships across the Atlantic will come laden

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with the freights destined for that channel of trade. The commerce, therefore, from Europe to the East Indies, China, and the West coast of this continent will be forced to pursue the old route, or fall into our hands." But relieved from the delays, difficulties, and consequent expense, and from the present impossibility of transit for heavy goods across the Isthmus, which divides the two seas, European and British traffic must necessarily give up the old route, in all cases where, by following the new one, there will be a material saving of time, or in the cost of navigation. This is clear, as otherwise American ships could arrive at British ports from Panama with cheaper cargoes from those markets, to which a Railroad across the Isthmus would afford an easier access. This is foreseen and indicated by the committee in their Report to Congress. They conceive it beyond doubt that the old route cannot be adhered to; but they do not stop here; the conclusions of this remarkable State Paper are carried yet further. "This," it says, "is *admitting* that *European ships* will come freighted to the terminus of the railroad on this side of the Isthmus with cargoes intended for the markets of the Pacific and China. *That, however, will not be the case.*"—We pause here for one moment, to fix the attention of the British merchant and shipowner, to our echo of this warning voice from afar—to arouse them from a heedless apathy and unconcern, to a due appreciation of the deep stake they unquestionably have, in the nature of the projected communications between the two great oceans, and *in the terms upon which, and the parties by whom,* any of these may eventually be carried out.

This Report then continues thus: "The large number of vessels bound to the ports of the United States, for cotton, rice, tobacco, lumber, flour, provisions, &c. &c. will bring the freights for those markets as ballast or cargoes, whence they will be conveyed by the railroad in our own fast sailing coasting vessels and steamers, which will also bring to us the commerce of the Pacific. This is very obvious, because if European ships were to sail with full cargoes direct to the railroad, they would run the risk of being compelled to return without freight, or come to the United States for it. We are much nearer to the Isthmus than the ports of Europe, and our means of communication and information will be so frequent and certain, our lines of steamers and coasting vessels so constantly on the alert, and will move with such celerity, that heavy European freighting ships will find it quite impossible to compete with them."

To whatever extent such results would be likely to flow, from the construction of a Railroad across any portion of the American Isthmus, through a necessity for the disembarcation of cargoes destined for transit, none of such a detrimental character,

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for the interests of British and European Shipping, would spring from the formation of a Water-way adequate to the admission of Ships of large burthen. The tendency, of the opening of such a channel of communication, for our Ships bound to the Pacific, China, the Indies, Eastern Archipelago, Australia, and New Zealand, would be to increase the direct traffic with Great Britain and Europe generally, and occasion a greater demand for our Shipping. Hence it is the obvious interest and necessity for the Government of this country, and those classes more immediately connected with mercantile pursuits, to promote the speedy formation of a Ship Canal. In so far as our best and most essential interests are identified with our colonial possessions, (independent intercourse with which would be almost practically intercepted, were that dream of aggrandisement presented to the United States to become realised), the promotion of a free and independent Shipping route, becomes an object of paramount importance to the people of this country.

The committee of Congress before referred to, take precisely the same view of the subject. They define, in the plainest terms, the respective value to them, and to us, of the respective projects of Rail or Water-way. "If," they report, "any change is to be given to the course of European commerce with the west coast of America and the East Indies, by a communication across the Isthmus of Panama, it is quite clear that a *Ship Canal* would be the only channel that could save it from falling rapidly into our hands, while it is equally certain that our interests point to a railroad as best suited in all respects to our position and progress."

Should this be in fact the key to the present policy of the United States, no sane man can hesitate in according it, as an urgent necessity, that every means at the disposal of the British Government should be used by them to secure the means of counteracting its mischievous effects, and to sustain those material interests at home and abroad, which the success of that policy would so eminently endanger. Let us therefore turn to the acts of the United States Government, these will not leave us halting in our judgment:—we shall find them in entire accord with the conclusions of Congress.

Thus a bill was presented to Congress in accordance with this Report. A Chargé d'Affaires was subsequently despatched to the State of Nicaragua, it being the first time that such an agent had been accredited to that quarter. The hostility of the State of Nicaragua to England was known, and her desire to enlist the United States in support of her pretensions and new fangled claims, by offering to their citizens the concession of the right of transit between the oceans through its own territory, and

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that which it would make its own, by the sole force of a *sic volo sic jubeo* declaration, made in defiance of the clear and independent rights of the King of Mosquito.

Besides this, it is to be noted that a Treaty concluded on the 7th of March 1848, by Captain Lock, R.N., on the part of Great Britain, as the protector of the Mosquito Territory, and certain Commissioners, appointed by the State of Nicaragua rendered this still more unwarrantable, the third article declaring—"That the government of the State of Nicaragua solemnly promise not to disturb the peaceful inhabitants of San Juan (Grey Town), understanding that any such act will be considered by Great Britain as an open declaration of hostilities." It will be seen that Nicaragua availed itself a mere twelvemonth afterwards, without grounds assigned, notice given, or justification attempted, of the opportunity which seemed to offer of a safe evasion of the spirit and meaning of this article.

Thus, in April of this year it entered into a contract with a Dr. Brown and Mr. Clapp, giving them, and such other citizens of the United States as might associate with them, the right of making a communication by steamers, and a railroad or canal from the port of San Juan, or St. John, across the Isthmus to the Pacific, on condition of their erecting certain buildings at the above-named Mosquito port, and obtaining the interference of the United States Government, to secure it to the State of Nicaragua as a future possession.

In June the Nicaraguans, impatient of delay, threatened a more serious step. The British Government having, in reply to the representations made by Mr. Castellon, an Envoy from Nicaragua, declined to accede to the desires of that State, to be permitted to hold the river and the port of St. John, apart from the Mosquito territory, the President issued a decree for a levy of war against Great Britain, we should have presumed more in bombast than reality, but for the calculated assistance from the United States. This decree is worth recording, to show the kind of arbitrary and despotic tyranny exercised in Nicaragua, under the name of a free republic, and the motto of "God—Union—Liberty."

By this decree, dated Leon, the 19th of June, the "Supreme Director of the State," declares it to be "of peremptory urgency to save the liberty of the Nicaraguans, placing the State in a position to defend its independence, which is in the most imminent danger, on account of the English Government having refused to do justice to our claim against the usurpation of the most precious part of our territory." On which it is ordered by the Minister of War—

Art. 1st. "All Nicaraguans, from sixteen to fifty years of age,

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shall take up arms for the maintenance of public order and the *territorial integrity* of the State, excepting the clergy," &c.

Art. 2nd. "Ordering all those who possess horses, equipments, and arms, to present themselves for enlistment, and all other persons, to the mayoralty of the city, or to the commanders of departments."

Art. 3rd. "Persons and horses, arms and equipments, not voluntarily given up, are subject to forcible seizure, and all fugitives, or persons concealing themselves, are declared outlaws."

Art. 4th. "Any forces collected and enlisted will be organised in a convenient manner to fulfil *their object*."

This stringent measure thus avowedly taken against the English, as the enemy to be met, was next succeeded by General Munoz (appointed to the chief command) openly threatening an immediate attack on the Mosquito territory at Grey Town, in utter disregard of the solemn engagement with the English Government not to disturb it. At the same time, the public prints, under the direction of the Nicaraguan Government, were employed in exciting the barbarous population of the country at large, into a state of mad hostility and ill-will against British subjects resident there, in the peaceful pursuit of commercial objects, for this purpose attributing to their instigation those domestic broils and civil wars, for which Nicaragua has for so long been distinguished, by a kind of infamous celebrity, among even the worst of the South American States.

In consequence of the above decree and threatening acts of Nicaragua, and not in any way on account of the "concession of the canal charter to Dr. Brown," as the *Times* was misled into supposing,* Mr. Chatfield, the British Consul-General, menaced Nicaragua with chastisement, if it persisted in this course of action, as will be seen from the terms of his letter to the Nicaraguan Government, which we shall presently subjoin.

As it is upon the supposition we have just mentioned, that some unjust and untenable animadversions were made on Mr. Chatfield, we may remark that his language was, in point of fact, not only called for from the representations made to him from Leon, by British subjects, that their lives were in danger, but seemed to present the only means of staying the proposed expedition of an undisciplined horde against Grey Town, which must have compelled the British Government to immediate hostilities, necessitated by a defiance against it, in the very terms of the treaty of March 1848, already quoted.

The *Times* also affixes the date of the letter in question as having been *written at Leon*, two days after Mr. Squiers' public reception by the authorities there, whereas it was written from

* See leading article, Thursday, Nov. 1st.

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the city of Guatemala, upwards of 700 miles distant, and more than a fortnight before Mr. Chatfield could have learnt of such an agent as Mr. Squiers having been even expected.

Under these two erroneous impressions, it is observed in the article in question, "If anything were required to render the impolicy or impropriety of such language more apparent, it is the fact that *only two days* before this despatch was written, on the 16th of July, Mr. Squiers, the American agent, had been received by the Republic of Nicaragua with every mark of amity and respect. Mr. Squiers had expressed in the strongest manner the desire of his Government to contract very close relations of friendship with Nicaragua."

Even had Mr. Chatfield been at Leon, and known of Mr. Squiers' tempting proffers and Nicaragua's greedy acceptance of them, looking to the urgency of the case, and the insolent proclamation of war, by which "*an actual offence had been committed*," we see not how he could better have conveyed to the newly-arrived American agent, the danger of encouraging or backing in any way the Nicaraguan Government, in the course it had entered on, than by plainly stating the consequences a persistance in it would involve. Mr. Chatfield's letter to the Nicaraguan Minister runs thus:—

Guatemala, July 18, 1849.

"It was my intention to attempt anew, by means of a friendly representation, to convince your government of the impolicy and injustice of leaning in your public papers towards the attacks fomented against the British Government, exciting odium and ill-will against the subjects of Her Majesty the Queen, who reside peacefully and inoffensively in the State of Nicaragua, in business of a legitimate character; but the Gubernatorial decree of the 19th of June last, which I received yesterday, is sufficiently conclusive and positive in its expressions, for me longer to doubt of the hostile intentions of Nicaragua towards Great Britain; nothing is left for me to do but to inform the Government of Her Britannic Majesty of this insulting and unmerited proceeding. I shall, nevertheless, not allow the opportunity to pass without declaring, as I do now, explicitly and formally, to your Government, *that the Queen of Great Britain has decided to sustain the rights of the Mosquito King*, and in consequence, whatever act may be done against him, will infallibly draw down on Nicaragua the most severe chastisement."

Having stated the occurrences which had taken place in Central America prior to the arrival of Mr. Squiers in July, and having inserted Mr. Chatfield's communication to Nicaragua, which reached its destination about a month later, we have next to advert to the reception of Dr. Brown's contract in the United States.

The Official Report made in favour of the practical dominion of the United States at Panama, the belief that through the

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hostility of Nicaragua, the door was shut to British enterprise there, and the knowledge that it must be equally closed to United States acquisitiveness, without the assent of Mosquito and Costa Rica, had left the subject of a Shipping route across this part of the Isthmus nearly a dead letter in North American speculation. But Dr. Brown's contract threw a new light on the subject;—to deny the existence of a Mosquito territory, of an independent Sovereign-Chieftain, through whom even the forefathers of the people of the United States, had enjoyed an indirect trade with the Spanish-American colonies, and with whom the present generation itself had traded, flashed before Brother Jonathan as a truly brilliant conception; one fraught with tempting expectations of profitable adventure, could it be matured into some reality, under the fostering care of the Cabinet of Washington. The hope was small, seeing the clear foundation of right in Mosquito, the unmistakable attitude and well-defined position taken by the British Government, and the highly respectable character of the President, General Taylor. However, he had been applied to, and had, early in July, despatched an Envoy to Nicaragua; there was no knowing, then, what the upshot might be, were he well egged on. Thus, the press of the United States, opened out in a series of the most extravagant misrepresentations and violent diatribes against the Mosquito Chief as a savage, and the British Protectorate as an imposture, an invention of yesterday. A mushroom company was also started at New York, which brought the British Consul on the scene, and led to a letter from him, couched in the following terms:—

"H. B. M. CONSULATE, New York, July 30.

"SIR,—Her Britannic Majesty's Government being informed that an agreement for the establishment of a communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific has been concluded between the Government of the State of Nicaragua, and Mr. Clapp and Dr. Brown, citizens of the United States, and agents of the 'New York and New Orleans Steam Navigation Company,'—of which Company you apprise me that you were one—from the execution of which agreement it is inferred that the Government of Nicaragua has led the New York and New Orleans Company to suppose that this Government is competent to dispose of the exclusive rights of navigating the St. John's River; such an agreement likewise containing a clause binding the company to build a public store at St. John's.

"I am instructed *officially to inform* the New York and New Orleans Steam Navigation Company,—which I take leave to do through you—*that* the boundary line of the Mosquito Kingdom touches the St. John's River at the Machuca Rapid, about thirty miles below the Lake Nicaragua, and that from thence to the mouth of the

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St. John's, the navigation of that river belongs to Mosquito. I have likewise to inform the Company *that* the Port of St. John's, now called Grey Town, at which they have agreed with the Nicaragua Government to build a store, also belongs to Mosquito; *that* her Majesty's government *is bound* to protect the King of Mosquito *in the exercise of the territorial rights which he possesses over Grey Town, and over the lower part of St. John's River*, and *that the Government of Nicaragua has entered into an agreement in regard to places where it has no competence.*

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your most obedient, humble servant,
(Signed) "ANTHONY BARCLAY.

"*To S. H. Ackerman, Esq.*"

This was an official announcement of the views of Her Majesty's Government, and the Cabinet of Washington has been very naturally led to address some interpellations to it. We can see no just cause whatever for any misunderstanding between the two Governments on that account, there being no possible interest or desire on our part to preclude any nation from free intercourse through Mosquito, to Nicaragua or the Pacific, although the British Government cannot disregard the great and manifest objections, which exist to conceding the *exclusive* transit through, or navigation of, the St. John's river.

We can now take up our review of the policy of the United States. The conduct of their new diplomatic agent, from the date of his arrival at Leon, is perfectly consistent with all that has gone before. The subject, however, will present itself in a new phase, and as introductory to it, we recall attention to the official Report of Congress, which declared it to be an object for them of primary interest and importance, to prevent the formation of a Ship Canal.

It is clear, that for this purpose, the possession of, or control over, such parts of the Isthmus through which it could be made would become essential. This could neither be sought for nor obtained by an avowal of such a purpose, so that it is only left us to ascertain, whether the means for its realisation have been, or are likely to be, obtained. On the other hand, a grander spirit on the part of the people of the States at large, might arise; or the enterprising energy of some prominent men, attracted to the project, might come to sway the public press and dispositions of the country. In either case the inevitable result would be an abandonment of the petty and narrow views presented by the above Report, in regard to the most magnificent undertaking now open to the execution of man. However, such nobler estimate of a noble enterprise would still leave it an object of selfish policy to debar its realisation, by any public association independent of the United States. Without pausing to inquire

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what may be the present or eventual aim of her policy, it suffices to observe, that any purpose she may have would be accomplished by obtaining the concession for her citizens, of *every practicable route* for European traffic between the two Oceans.

It is not our intention to enter any further into Mr. Squiers sayings and doings on his arrival at Leon, than as may directly tend to prove, that the right to the exclusive disposal of events in this quarter, and the power to decide as to the nature of the route which shall be made, and the terms upon which it shall be enjoyed, are the objects at which his language and acts are pertinaciously, but not skilfully, directed. Mr. Squiers betrays the purpose and overshoots the mark, and this mission promises to be a failure for all useful and practical ends.

Mr. Squiers, in addressing the President of the State of Nicaragua, at his public presentation on the 6th of July, declared the two Republics to "possess common interests," and that "to secure the permanent welfare of both it is essential that they should pursue a system of policy *exclusively American*"—that, in the language of an American statesman, "its foundations must be laid in principles of politics and morals new and distasteful to the thrones and dominions of the elder world;" and Mr. Squiers then proceeded to designate "a cardinal principle in this policy to be a total exclusion of all foreign influence from the domestic and internal affairs of the American Republics"—that "America belongs to Americans, and is sacred to Republican freedom:" he concluded this modest declaration of a new international doctrine, at which the maritime powers of Europe, having trading interests or territorial possessions on the coasts and islands of either America, will somewhat stare, by declaring himself, to—"have been led to indulge the belief that the time is not far distant when the commerce of two hemispheres shall find within your territories an easy passage from sea to sea. It is one of the objects of my mission to assist in an enterprize so important to the whole world, an enterprize, the successful prosecution of which must enable this country to obtain a degree of prosperity second to that of no other on the globe."

Thus the promoting of "*a passage* from sea to sea" is one of the objects of his mission, and if we were to take this speech as significant of what the others are, we should deem the Cabinet of Washington to have taken to knight-errantry, as Mr. Squiers does no less than throw down the gauntlet of defiance to Europe at large.

Mr. Squiers next went to business:—The Steam Company had failed (it was alleged), to ratify the contract made with Dr. Brown, and therefore on the 27th of August following, within little more than a month after the above expression of Mr.

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Squiers' views, a new contract was duly executed, under the influence and direct intervention of Mr. Squiers himself, in favour of a Mr. White, said to have been deputed by some parties, proposing to form a company in the United States; to run a canal between the seas, of dimensions sufficient for ships of the largest burthen.

One of the chief clauses in the contract with Mr. White, is that the enterprise shall be possessed by American citizens, and the majority of its stock be held by them.

Another, that they shall possess the *exclusive* right to inland steam navigation.

Powers are likewise accorded for constructing a Ship canal from *any one* of *their* ports *on the Atlantic*, to any one deemed feasible on the Pacific; the remarkable part of this clause being, that the State of Nicaragua never possessed any port at all on the Atlantic!

But this is nothing, when compared with the cool hardihood and effrontery, with which the nations of the world are informed, that the canal will be open to their ships, products, and people, on equal terms with those of the United States, "*provided* such nations shall *first enter* into *such* treaties, stipulations, and guarantees respecting said canal *as may hereafter be entered into between the State of Nicaragua and the United States!*"

This is neither more nor less than a proclamation of joint-sovereignty towards the world of that portion of the Isthmus, arrogated to itself since 1836, and since then only by the State of Nicaragua. It is impossible the United States' Government could for one moment support so monstrous an assumption. Nor could Great Britain, or those other maritime powers interested with herself, in the securing some independent Shipping Channel across the Isthmus, for one moment tolerate such a stipulation, which is even too absurd to be regarded as insolent. What an *improvised* Chargé d'Affaires from the United States, and the ignorant but presumptuous Government, to which he has been accredited may deem a very simple straight go-a-head decision, to be accepted as pronounced, the President and statesmen of the United States cannot fail to recognise, at once, as involving the ridiculous requirement, that all nations should blindly contract to submit to the perpetual dictation of "the State of Nicaragua and the United States." But, if we were to allow it even possible for the Government of the United States to adopt such a clause, then we should have to attribute to her a policy and designs, even more exclusive and dangerous than we can at present for a single moment contemplate. In reference to this contract, it has been well remarked by the New York correspondent of a morning paper,* that—"this transit *will be* or *may be*

* The *Herald.*

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made, one peculiarly and exclusively tending to give privileges to American interests. The vague clause above is capable of application to any sort of subsequent arrangement by which foreign commerce may in the end find itself mulcted."

Unquestionably this *may be* so, and this in many ways which it is impossible to foresee beforehand, but we think we can come to a conclusion of what *will be* done in that way for America, to the detriment of European and British interests on the highest possible authority. We advert to a Bill reported by a Committee of Congress, and accordingly introduced into both Houses, in favour of an annual grant for the Panama railroad. It having been stipulated in such Bill, on behalf of the United States' Government, that its Troops and munitions of war should be transported across the Isthmus, and warehouses erected at each end, free of cost, for its own stores, and also that the tolls to be raised on goods belonging to American citizens, and coming in enrolled vessels of the United States, and the fares of American citizens and passengers arriving in United States' vessels, should be conveyed at a cost fixed by the Government; and further, that all passengers arriving in United States' ships should be transported if required in the order of their arrival.

This bill did not pass last session, simply because a project for a Tehuantepec Shipping route claimed to be examined first; but it contains indications, of the utmost importance to British Trade and Shipping, of the kind of "Treaties and Stipulations" which "may hereafter be entered into between the State of Nicaragua and the United States" under this *paulo-post-futurum* clause, and a warning of how much it concerns the most essential interests of this country, that this Shipping route should not be also monopolised by a United States' Company.

But, inasmuch as Mr. Squiers and the State of Nicaragua require that all nations shall, as a condition of the admission of their products and shipping through the canal, contract to accede to all treaties which "*may hereafter be entered into* between the State of Nicaragua and the United States," what is to prevent them (were the British protectorate over Mosquito withdrawn, and the rights of Costa Rica extinguished), from making a treaty, whereby fortifications should be erected along the canal route, to be occupied by the troops of the United States, with the right so close such passage to the shipping of any power with whom the might be at war. We are much mistaken or this is one of the very things to which an accredited agent of the United States, has already obtained the assent of the State of Nicaragua!

The assumption upon which this contract has been made, and upon which alone it can for a moment be sustained, is, that in Nicaragua alone are vested sovereign rights of territorial juris-

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diction and possession over the whole of the line over which her grants extend. The contract with Dr. Brown was confined to the line of the River St. John only, and the port at its entrance; by the present contract, however, Nicaragua is made, under Mr. Squiers' auspices, to extend such right to "any of *her* ports on the Atlantic!" The object of this is self-evident, as it amounts to the assertion of a right of dominion over the Mosquito territory, in which alone are situated such Atlantic ports as could communicate with the Lake of Nicaragua.

Under these circumstances, it may be worth while to state those grounds, upon which it may be safely asserted that the State of Nicaragua has not the shadow of a claim to sovereignty over any one port on the Atlantic, and consequently that the contract in question is but so much waste paper.

Even if the State of Nicaragua could prove, that Spain held or exercised the right of sovereignty over the Eastern coast of the Isthmus of Central America, it would not suffice to give to the Nicaraguans the present right of dominion over any part of it. To establish this, Nicaragua must show that the Mosquito coast was under the positive jurisdiction, and within the actual limits, of the old province of that name, when it appertained to Spain. And if she could make this out, she would then have to go one step further to place the claim she now makes within international right. It would be necessary for her to show, that when the social fabric was dissolved by the revolution, the people of the Mosquito coast joined with the other population of Nicaragua in forming the new state of that name.

Assuming, for the moment, that Spain had formerly the right of sovereignty over the Mosquito coast, it is beyond all question that such coasts were never within the limits assigned by Spain to the province of Nicaragua, or even under its jurisdiction. That, on the contrary, the Northern part of the coast was considered by Spain to consist of two distinct provinces, altogether separate from Nicaragua; the first, extending from the River Aguan to Cape Gracios á Dios, was known as the province of Taguzgalpa, and the second, extending from Cape Gracios a Dios to the River San Juan, was called the province of Tolagalpa. Further, the coast line Southward of this river was defined by Spain, as being within the limits of Costa Rica.—So much for the Atlantic ports of Nicaragua under Spanish dominion.

A distinction however arose as regards one of these ports—that of San Juan. It arose from necessity; for while Spain arrogated to herself a nominal sovereignty over the Mosquito coast, and divided it into provinces, as above detailed, the aboriginal Indians, continuing to present a bold front, and successfully to defy every attempt to bring them into subjection, or to

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establish Spanish settlements among them, the permission to trade through two of the ports of Mosquito, had to be purchased from them by an annual tribute. Thus the port of San Juan, in the nominal province of Tolagalpa, and the port of Matina, within the limits assigned to Costa Rica, became availbale to Spanish trade.

By a Royal Order of the King of Spain, dated Aranguez, Feb. 26, 1796—(and we especially advert to it, because it is upon that which the Nicaraguan government seems chiefly to rely in support of its assumed rights to the port of San Juan)—certain privileges of trade were accorded to "the province of Nicaragua and others of the kingdom of Guatemala." This order is confined to giving the liberty to "trade direct with the metropolis," and to declaring San Juan "a port of entry" for "the city of Granada, on the lake of Nicaragua," leaving therefore the territorial demarcations already defined precisely where they were. Moreover, this Royal Order in no way affected the rights of the King of Mosquito, for we learn from Mr. Quin, a highly respectable and wealthy inhabitant in Corn Island, adjoining the Mosquito coast, that tribute continued subsequently to be paid for this port by Spain. He deposes to the fact "that, in 1802, he met a craft belonging to the Mosquito king at Boca del Toro, manned with Mosquito men and a chief, who informed him they were bound to San Juan de Nicaragua, to receive from the Spanish 400 dollars as tribute for King Stephen, which they said was paid *annually* for that port." As regards the port of Matina, Colonel Quijano, of "the army of the *State of Nicaragua*" certifies that, "in the State of Costa Rica, an annual tribute has always been paid to the King of the Mosquitos, and this has always been the case since my infancy, by order of the Spanish Government."

The relations maintained by the Mosquito Kings towards the Spaniards at Nicaragua, is further exemplified by an incident of a more recent date, which will show that they were not considered as *subjects* by the Spaniards, and also that the Mosquito sovereignty was no fiction! Roberts,* who wrote in 1816, relates that when he was taken prisoner by the Spaniards at San Juan, with some Mosquito Indians who accompanied him in his trading voyage, and carried to Leon, he was, after being liberated and on his way down the river, met "by a courier in a dispatch boat from the Spanish Commandant of the battery at the harbour. He was the bearer of letters of the Mosquito King, written in the Spanish language to the Governor of San Carlos and Leon, in which were demanded the instant release of Brown and his other subjects, and in case of refusal, he roundly threatened to commence an

* Roberts's Central America, XVII. *Constable's Miscellany*, p. 259.

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Indian warfare on all the Spanish settlements bordering on his territory!"

But our proof that, at all events, Nicaragua has no claim of right through Spain to any of the ports of Mosquito can be carried yet further, leaving it as a fact beyond all question. By the Royal Order, dated San Lorenzo, the 30th of Nov. 1803, the King of Spain "resolves that the island of St. Andrew, and the part of the *Mosquito shore* from Cape Gracios á Dios inclusively, towards the river Chagres, shall be *separated* from the Captain-Generalcy of Guatemala and *annexed to* the Vice Royalty of Santa Fé." Hence it is clear that any right which Spain may have had, if it vests in any of the new Spanish American Republics, can only do so in that of New Granada, and the alleged right of the State of Nicaragua is therefore "arbitrary and null."

But assuming Mosquito to have been a dependency of Spain, if the right be conceded to the people of the kingdom of Guatemala, to dissolve the tie of allegiance to Spain, and to recast and remodel their social and political existence into, first, a federal republic, and since, into distinct sovereign unities, and to form such alliances as to them severally seems good, so must the right be equally conceded to the people of the provinces of Taguzgalpa and Tolagalpa. Thus, as these people, known best as the Mosquito Indians, have, through their king and chieftains, again sought to renew the ancient ties which existed between them and the British crown, it was as competent for the Queen of England to accept their voluntary fealty and extend to them a coveted protection now, as it ever was at any anterior time. Thus, in 1815, in 1824, and in 1845, have three Mosquito Kings been solemnly crowned at Jamaica and Honduras, as their ancestors were of yore.

No rights of Spain could pass to the Nicaraguans, to the detriment of the natural right of the Mosquito Indians, to establish their independence from Spain, or preclude Great Britain, on such independence becoming unquestionable, from renewing the old ties by which they were formerly bound. It is indisputable, as the facts stand, that Spain alone could have had a right to remonstrate against this. She did not do so—she saw no cause to do it; circumstances had extinguished, together, her interest, her power, and her rights in the matter. These have long since become a mere page in her past annals.

We advert to this, inasmuch as in 1786 a treaty was made with Spain, by which Great Britain abandoned her protectorate of Mosquito to Spain. At the previous treaty of peace of September 1783, when the evacuation of British subjects from territory claimed by Spain, in the neighbourhood of Bellize, was stipulated, it was declared to be only "from any other parts (than

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those expressly given to them by the said article), whether on the *Spanish Continent*, or in the islands whatsoever *dependent on the Spanish* Continent." The term American Continent, pressed for by Spain, was not allowed by Great Britain, on the ground that this would involve the Mosquito shore, which was as independent of the Crown of Spain as any of those other parts of the American Continent held by other independent States and Powers. But in 1796, to the astonishment of every one, another treaty was concluded with Spain, the first article of which runs as follows:—

"The subjects of His Britannic Majesty, and the other settlers who have till now enjoyed the protection of England, shall evacuate the *country of the Mosquitos*, and the continent in general, and the adjacent isles, without exception, situated beyond the frontier line of the territory granted by His Catholic Majesty to the English, *for the uses* specified in the third article of this convention."

This convention excited general indignation in England; it was utterly uncalled for, purely a gratuitous act; and was justly stigmatised as a profligate surrender of important rights and interests. This step was said to have been the result of the jealous notions of some influential West India proprietors, who apprehended that the settlements on the Mosquito coast would rival with the staple produce and trade of the West Indies.

A motion of censure was made in the House of Lords by Lord Rawdon in 1787, he was supported by the Duke of Manchester, who had negotiated the prior treaty of 1783, when the British protectorate was maintained, as more important than the conclusion of peace. We got nothing whatever in exchange for what we surrendered by this convention, as the "uses specified" consisted of the right "to cut logwood and all other wood"—a right we already enjoyed without the permission of Spain.

It is to be observed, however, as regards this treaty, that it is a distinct recognition of the existence of a Mosquito nation and territory independent of Spain, for in the article cited above, it speaks of the "country of the Mosquitos," and they are also spoken of in subsequent articles as Indians "situated upon the *frontier of the Spanish possessions*." The Northern and Western "frontiers," where this "country of the Mosquitos" was situated, being the then "Spanish possessions" or provinces, but now actually the States of Honduras and Nicaragua,—who yet deny the existence of an independent Mosquito territory! It is also to be noticed, that we never ceded, or pretended to cede, the Mosquito territory to Spain; all we did was to withdraw ourselves from its protectorate, and to

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leave Spain to exercise it, and to establish settlements among them. It is notorious, however, as we have already stated, that the Mosquito Indians declined to admit such relations with Spain, and maintained in arms against her a courageous independence.

The Republic of Costa Rica stands in most striking contrast and relief with Nicaragua. While the latter has from the first hour that independence dawned upon her, been plunged in a constant succession of intestine commotions, anarchy, and bloodshed, to the impoverishment and diminution of her people, all travellers and merchants trading with those countries, concur in testifying that Costa Rica has, by a steady persevering industry, and a generally enlightened and peaceful administration of affairs, raised herself from the lowest depths of provincial poverty and insignificance, into the condition of the most prosperous and promising of the Central American States. Costa Rica alone of these states has paid off her portion of the national debt of the Central American federation, which she did in 1841. She enjoys a surplus revenue.

The opposite career of the two states of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and the antagonism to which the different course of conduct each has pursued has given birth, is remarkable. When in 1821 the ancient kingdom of Guatemala proclaimed itself independent of Spain, and became a portion of the Mexican Empire, under Iturbide, the limits of Costa Rica were extended, and it was proclaimed a province of Mexico, with the town of Nicaragua for its capital. However, in July 1823, the provinces of Guatemala separated themselves from Mexico, and by the determination of a national convention, they resolved to reconstitute themselves into a federation of five States, to be designated by the names of the five provinces which formed part of the Captain Generalcy of Guatemala, the district of Chiapas alone excepted, which adhered to Mexico. The Federal constitution was proclaimed in November 1824, and the new Congress elected under its authority was installed in February 1825.

Costa Rica and Nicaragua became two of the States of the new Federation. The State of Costa Rica, as also the States of Guatemala, Salvador, and Honduras, had completed their domestic legislatures prior to the close of 1824. Not so Nicaragua, it still remained unconstituted; an intestine war was carried on between each of the districts which formed part of the ancient province of that name. Each town or village had its chief, who was supreme, and waged war against the rest. This lasted, more or less, until the year 1826. Meanwhile, the district of Guanacaste, which, under Spain, formed part of the province of Nicaragua, kept aloof from this anarchy and carnage. Unequal to

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stand alone—unable to obtain protection from a State which had yet no existence, it declined to form part of it, and, exercising the new-born right of free election, it incorporated itself unsolicited, with the State of Costa Rica. It did so in time to return members to its first domestic Legislature, and while in the districts which now compose the State of Nicaragua, society still remained dissolved, and an universal confusion prevailed, it joined with the remainder of Costa Rica, in returning members to the Federal Congress.

The course taken by Guanacaste was brought before the Federal Congress, when the representatives of Nicaragua were present, and its continuing annexed to Costa Rica was duly sanctioned. Indeed, in a Congress composed of members of new states, owing each its existence, alone to the popular voice, which had destroyed the constituted government under which they were born; no other course, than the recognition of the natural and inherent right of each district, to elect for itself the State to which it would adhere, could have been tolerated, consistently with their own origin.

We have stated that the federal tie was dissolved in 1838, the Port of San Juan, which had been just previously seized upon from Mosquito, remaining in possession of the Nicaraguans, until their expulsion from thence on the 1st of January 1848.

The Nicaraguans, while in possession of that Port, managed to drive away nearly all commerce from it, in consequence of the capricious exactions of the Custom house it established, and the tyranny it exercised. On one known occasion, in 1841, two United States' ships had to apply to the King of Mosquito, then off the harbour in a British man-of-war steamer, for protection, which was afforded, by the dispersion of the Nicaraguan force. On another, in 1847, a French gentleman, the Viscount de Barruel Beauvert, was obliged to apply to the Consul-General of Mosquito, Mr. Walker, to obtain his son's release from prison, into which he had been thrown by the Nicaraguan Commandant at Port San Juan, for having refused to "receive bad money as good," Mr. Walker stating in his despatch to Lord Palmerston, that he had "had frequent complaints from British subjects and from foreigners" of the arrogant and exacting conduct pursued there, and recently one from Baron Bulow.

The arrogance of their conduct to the once sister State of Costa Rica is almost inconceivable, were it not for the known jealousy entertained by Nicaragua at its tranquillity and progress. The growing trade and increasing resources of Costa Rica had rendered it an important object for her, to have a good port on the Atlantic coast for her produce to Europe. The port of Matina is not sufficiently safe, capacious, and healthy, for a com-

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mercial entrepot. Already had the Costa Ricans, since their independence, made a good cart-road from their capital, San José, to the port of Punta Arenas, on the Pacific, a distance of 90 miles. This, it should be remarked, is highly to their praise, as all the other roads in Central America are to this day but mule tracks. Costa Rica having introduced the growth of coffee, and finding that from its superior quality, it had become her staple produce and of considerable European sale, became desirous to avoid the necessity of a continued use of the long, expensive, and often perilous voyage round Cape Horn. The Costa Rica people, therefore, proposed to make another road for public conveyances of 60 miles in length, from San José to the river Sarapiqui, which flows into the St. John, and whence their produce could be floated down in barges to port St. John, since called Grey Town, and thence shipped for Europe, in exchange for manufactured articles. But this was prevented, the Nicaragua Government refusing to enable Costa Rica to export or import by this channel! Thus the enterprise was for the time abandoned. On the Mosquito King, however, recovering possession of this port, the Costa Rica Government proposed to make this road, and Nicaragua went so far as to threaten them with war, if they did not desist from this intention. She stopped short with the threat, and the contract for this road is now in the hands of British subjects.

Its completion will be of the utmost advantage to Grey Town. In 1848, Costa Rica exported 150,000 quintals (cwts.) of coffee, about 10,000 ox and cow hides, a considerable quantity of mother-of-pearl, sarsaparilla, and dye woods. The annual value of her present exports and imports may be estimated at £350,000, which would speedily increase, by her being enabled to substitute the route through Grey Town for that by Cape Horn. Indeed, a considerable traffic would spring up along this road, with Costa Rica, and a new country be opened to industrious emigration, and the outlay of capital. From the nature of her climate and the table lands, which spread over the heart of the country, every variety of tropical and European produce may be produced. Wheat and potatoes are already grown on the table lands. The opening through the Sarapiqui from Costa Rica would be a most important event for Grey Town. The soil around it is chiefly sand, so that it is at present dependent for its supplies from Nicaragua, and, in consequence of the disturbances which so frequently prevail there, no regular supplies can be calculated upon. On the recent outbreak headed by Samosa, none could be obtained from thence for a considerable time. A brisk traffic is, therefore, likely to be carried on through the Sarapiqui route to Grey Town, to the encouragement of further settlers in that locality.

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On the completion of the road to San José, which, it is estimated, may be accomplished within a twelvemonth, an advantageous trade might be established with Costa Rica and Mosquito, by running a regular line of packet ships for traffic and passengers between Liverpool and Grey Town. This would then become, in lieu of Panama, the necessary route for British trade to the whole of Central America, California, and the Northern coasts of the Pacific. Indeed, were a monthly line of steamers established direct to Grey Town, and, pending the formation of a Shipping canal, should an independent route for British traffic be secured across Costa Rica, under the wise and fostering care of our Government, the proposed steam communication with New Zealand and Australia could be effected with more ease and speed this way than by either of the others at present proposed; besides which, the realization of such an undertaking would at once give life and strength to British settlements in Mosquito, and become of incalculable advantage to our trading interests.

Before closing our observations, it is as well we should say a few words here as to the character of the territories in question. At this portion of the Isthmus, in a nearly central position between the Atlantic and Pacific, a magnificent internal lake spreads its waters for 90 miles in length, and averaging 30 to 40 miles at its greatest breadth. Upwards of a hundred feet above each ocean, its deep and capacious waters are competent to feed canals, to the two seas of the greatest necessary capacity, for ships of the largest burthen. Fed by internal rivers and streams, which flow into its bed, it finds a vent for its superabundant waters through the River St. John to the Caribean Sea, where there is a fine well sheltered harbour, on the northern side of which stands Grey Town, and over it floats the flag of the King of Mosquito. The northern bank of the River St. John up to the Machuca Rapids, a distance of about 60 miles, belonging to that sovereign, and the remaining distance to the Lake, forming part of the territory of Nicaragua, which stretches thence along the northern bank of the Lake to the Pacific. Nicaragua possesses on its Pacific coast two harbours, Realejo and San Juan del Sur, the former of which has lately been most in favour, as the point to which a canal or railway might be made. Its territory terminates at the small river La Flor, on the Pacific, which separates the State of Nicaragua from the Republic of Costa Rica, immediately below the Port of San Juan del Sur. The southern bank of the Lake, from a few miles above the River Sapoa, and the southern bank of the River St. John, down to and along the Colorado outlet to the sea, belongs to Costa Rica, since the independence from Spain; subject, however, to any claim of the King of Mosquito, from above the Sarapiqui

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River to the coast line—a reservation of claim founded on right, the Kings of Mosquito having not only received tribute from Spain for the use of Ports St. John and Matina, but been accustomed to levy it on the Indian tribes inhabiting the whole line of coast as far as King's Buppan, below the Chiriqui Lagoon, which from time immemorial have yielded their undisputed allegiance to the Mosquito kings.

It has hitherto been supposed that a Shipping canal entering by the Port of St. John must necessarily pass through the State of Nicaragua. We do not see, however, why any such conclusion should have been come to, excepting only that the only two Pacific ports hitherto spoken of are in the territory of Nicaragua, and these have had able advocates in Mr. Baillie and Prince Louis Napoleon, who, when in exile, published a very useful little work, showing the practicability of this undertaking, and the great advantages which would result from it to the world. The Prince's attention had been turned to Nicaragua alone, and to the port of St. John on the Atlantic side, and of Realejo on the Pacific, as the best adapted as termini of a Ship Canal. But Sir Edward Belcher, R.N., who surveyed the boasted port of Realejo, describes it to be execrably bad, and only enjoying an undeserved reputation through the high-flown account of it in the *Modern Traveller*, a book of some repute in the United States. He recommends the Estero Real, in the Gulf of Fonseca, as an infinitely superior outlet to the Pacific. A better and easier line is not unlikely to be found in Costa Rica, by a proper and careful survey of such avenues as it may seem to afford for the execution of so important a project. And looking to the character of its population, it would certainly offer a preferable prospect, should British enterprise be finally led to undertake its accomplishment. A serious responsibility would be incurred did such an opportunity present itself, and were it lost to this country. At present the public is not sufficiently informed on the subject of the questions which it involves, to be awake to all its magnitude and importance to us, in a national point of view. There can be no doubt, however, that the British government is fully so, and, as far as their acts are known, they deserve to be lauded for the enlightened foresight, energy, and firmness they have exhibited.

The British Government was the first to recognise the independence of the Central American States, and has ever evinced the most friendly dispositions towards them. After the death of Mr. Walker, a gentleman who rendered valuable services to Mosquito, Mr. Christie having succeeded as Her Majesty's Agent and Consul General in Mosquito, was sent in September, 1848, on a special mission to Costa Rica and Nicaragua, for the promo-

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tion of the common interest and mutual friendly intercourse of those countries. He was received by M. Castro, the President of Costa Rica, with every consideration, the whole population of the capital turning out to welcome the British agent. Far otherwise in Nicaragua, Mr. Christie was met on his arrival at Leon, by a letter from the minister, the superscription of which did not recognise his official title, and the contents informing him, that as an accredited agent to Mosquito the Government would not recognise him officially, but would pay him all the attention due to a distinguished British subject. Mr. Christie, in reply, declared he would quit Leon in three days, except this decision were reversed; and a second letter being addressed to him in answer, with a similar superscription to the first, he returned it unopened and left the place. Costa Rica has since then sent an Envoy to England, M. Molina, with a view to promote closer ties of amity with this country.

But to return to the projects of communications between the two great oceans. The United States have already got three available routes to the Pacific, one for a railway across *their own territory*, to San Francisco, on the Pacific; a second across the isthmus of Tehuantepec, for Shipping; and a third across Panama, for general traffic,—is it desirable, is it safe, that they should *monopolise* the fourth also, the Shipping way by Grey Town? They have exclusive advantages and privileges by the three first, they are in the hands of their own citizens, and by the stipulations made for the Panama project, we see how their controlling power is likely to be used in giving preferences to their own shipping and traffic. Thus in the contract with Nicaragua, and the vague and general clause adverted to, we may perceive how easily such changes and additions may be "*hereafter*" made, as would (in the language of the official Report) "throw into the warehouses and shipping of the United States the entire com merce of the Pacific Ocean."

It is clearly, therefore, a necessary and paramount interest of Great Britain and Europe at large, that an independent route should be obtained,—a route which, while equally open to United States' shipping and all the world, should remain free from her arbitrary control.

As regards British connexion with Mosquito, it may be briefly stated, to date from an early period subsequent to the conquest of Jamaica by Cromwell; suspended in the year 1786, it was thirty years afterwards officially renewed. The rights of Spain having long before lapsed, through the failure of her plans, and the abandonment of her efforts, official relations were renewed with the Mosquito King by Sir George Arthur, then Governor of Honduras. From that time down to the present

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moment, the independence and separate existence of Mosquito has been recognised by all British authorities. In 1843, at the solicitation of the King, and with a view to the development among his people of all the blessings of civilisation, Her Majesty was advised, under Lord Aberdeen, to revert to the system which prevailed before 1786, and appoint a Resident as her representative near the King. Thus the mutual obligations of Great Britain and Mosquito became confirmed and strengthened. And, taking a review of the whole of the facts, we must say,—if the Mosquito Indians have no title to their independence, after having maintained it for two centuries, and part of the time against one of the most powerful nations of the globe—then, there is no certainty or security in those rules of international right, which have hitherto been deemed sacred and inviolable by the nations of Europe; and which have been honoured in the practice of the statesmen, and adorned by the writings of some of the most illustrious citizens, of the United States.

POSTSCRIPT, Thursday, 13th December, 1849.

Since the foregoing was first published, a despatch of Mr. Chatfield's to the Nicaraguan Government has reached this country, in which the fact of Spain not having recognised the independence of the Central American States is noted; it is thus placed beyond question, that none of them can derive rights through her.

This Morning, a mail from New York, states that a party of Americans wrecked on the Mosquito shore, had proceeded 30 miles in the interior, and burnt an Indian town, on account of wrongs alleged to have been done them on the coast. The King had gone to the spot to obtain particulars of this wanton and lawless act.

Intelligence has also arrived of the Island of Tigre, in the Gulf of Fonseca on the Pacific side, and in a commanding position on that coast, having been ceded by the State of Honduras to the United States. The argument used to induce this cession, Mr. Squiers avows to have been, that it was about to be appropriated by England in payment of debts due to British subjects! So much for the motive—as regards the act, it seems strangely inconsistent with raising any question as to the rights of England on the Mosquito Territory, derived too as these are from the aboriginal possessors!

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